

Andrew Jackson Donelson to Andrew Jackson, December 28, 1844, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

class=MsoNormal>ANDREW J. DONELSON TO JACKSON.

New Orleans, December 28, 1844.

My D'r Uncle, I have been employed since I have been here, in making out some despatches to the Government, and writing a few private letters to Gentlemen in Washington, among them Mr. Benton with a hope of aiding in the passage of the annexation bill.

I thought it likely that Mr. Benton would receive in good temper some suggestions from me showing the impracticability of ever getting Texas on his plan. Accordingly I have thrown together the leading objections to his proposition to obtain the consent of Mexico, and to the introduction at this time of the questions of slavery and the number of states to be formed out of Texas, in the consideration of the question of annexation or more properly reannexation.

The main point is to get Texas on the same footing we did Louisiana in 1803. Once in the Union there will be of course no fear of foreign influence, and the issues to be presented on the questions of slavery and number of States, can be settled calmly and peaceably. Texas would not come into the Union on Mr. Benton's terms. She would want all the rights and privileges that Louisiana had, and would spurn the idea of receiv[i]ng them by permission of Mexico. She has no fear of Mexico. On the contrary Houston could march into the Territory and compel her to give independence to his country. He is only restrained

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by the wish to spare the further effusion of blood, and to maintain a position favorable to the measure of reannexation.

On the subject of boundary there can be no difficulty. It would be enough to specify Texas as embracing only the Territory over which she maintains actual jurisdiction. This would leave out Santa Fee, and all that district of country on the Rio Grande which is north of that already occupied by Texas and Represented in her Congress. All not thus included might be left for future friendly settlement with Mexico, who would doubtless be very willing to sell to us whatever might be necessary to connect us with Oregon.

These points I have run over with some particularity to Mr. Benton, and appealed to him to modify his position so as not to endanger the 0374 350 question of reannexation. How he will take it I do not know. I trust kindly, but if otherwise, it will be perhaps as well for him to know at once what is to be the view entertained of his course by the friends of the new administration.

Genl. Houston did not answer your letter to him, written after the rejection of the Treaty. My explanation of it is that he despaired of the success of the Democratic party, and preferred to stand uncommitted, and free to select his ground if Texas should be obliged to pursue a national cause independent of us. He likes yet to dwell upon the capacity of Texas to extend her Territory to the Pacific and even detach Oregon from us, because there are no Alleghanies to separate them. But this may be treated as a fancy originating in the belief that the United States served his country unkindly. His mind is now fixed upon the hope of reannexation, and neither he nor the present Government will favor an opposing movement while there is a prospect of success.

He is devoted to you, considering that he owes his success at the battle of St. Jacinto to the recollection of your plans of battle in your campaigns against the Creek Indians. He says that his great merit is in following your example. You will be glad to hear that he has become a steady man, discharging with great propriety all the duties of a husband

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and parent. His wife is said to be a lady of great accomplishment, possessing excellent taste in music, and observing with much exactness the exercises of prayer and religious worship in her family circle. He says that his greatest ambition is to make a pilgrimage to the Hermitage, and obtain your blessing on his boy. You may expect him in the spring.